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FOURTH QUARTER - 1952

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THE TRUMPET OF JUBILEE

Eric M. North

WE shall not, in this article, quarrel with those whose classical education leads them to prefer "sesquicentennial" to "third jubilee," but in view of the cause at heart "jubilee" would seem the appropriate word and the right mood.

For we are approaching the one hundred and fiftieth year of the Bible Society conception and Bible Society work, and this is good reason for jubilee and jubilation. As one thinks of the inspired inauguration of the idea in 1804, of the great host of persons who have given their thought and talent and prayer to it, of the amazing product in printed volumes and the equally amazing achievements of translators and colporteurs and all who worked with them, and of the fruitage in souls won to Christ and churches edified, one will cry out "Glory to God."

But this is not yet the time to write the history and appraise the results of these three half centuries. It is rather the occasion to consider the meaning of a jubilee and the opportunity which it provides.

When one turns to the Biblical conception and makes allowance for the differences between the social structure of the early Hebrews and of modern Bible Societies, one may perhaps summarise the meaning of a year of jubilee after this fashion. A year of jubilee is a year to be hallowed, to be marked by putting one's affairs in order especially in respect to one's fellowmen, a year in which the fertility of the soil is to be conserved, and a year in which liberty is to be proclaimed. This jubilee year is the fiftieth year.

In the case of the Bible Societies this third " fiftieth year " begins March 7th, 1953 and ends March 7th, 1954. Would it not be well if all the Bible Societies which trace in some measure their conception and origin to the historic event of 1804 should use the occasion for deeds done in the spirit of the ancient jubilees ? Every human institution needs a period such as this to clear out the useless practices, to appraise the tasks ahead, to plan, and to gather strength to meet the future.

May I venture some suggestions that I believe might bear great fruit for every Society ?

" A year to be hallowed." Surely that must mean for us, both as individuals and in the groups in which we work, a period of re-consecration to our Lord and to the adventurous task He has committed to us. Such a reconsecration requires earnest prayer and true dedication. Such prayer and such dedication must not only have as its content awareness of God and our relation to Him. It also must be aware in fresh degree of the character of the task to which He calls us and to which we dedicate ourselves. Let us then in this year plan for times of quiet reflection on God's purposes for man, on the part the Bible must play in them, and especially seek His vision of what our Society in particular should be doing in the immediate future, asking Him to help us to look beyond current limitations and small goals.

Might this not also be a year of putting our affairs in order ? Do we not all have some profitless ways and routines ? Are there not some places where fresh thinking, perhaps outside counsel, would improve our actions ? Perhaps we should thoughtfully consider whether we have made our fellow-workers in every position free to do their best work. Are we doing all that we ought or, conversely, are we carrying an overload because we hold in our own hands what we should give to others to do ? Perhaps we do not realise the capacities for suggestions, for counsel, for improvement which lie in those assigned to the more routine tasks. Are we giving adequate support and thinking to our co-operative relations with other Bible Societies, with the U.B.S., with the missionary Societies ? Have we taken time to think and plan with our minds open to the leading of the Spirit of God ?

Any one responsible for any phase of our great work can set before himself questions as pertinent as or more pertinent than these. Let us make a special effort to do this in this year of jubilee, to think more deeply and plan more soundly.

One might think that the ancient Hebrew practice of letting the ground lie fallow in the year of jubilee might encourage us to make no effort to seek support, but leave the fields of our financial cultivation unploughed. But if we consider the purpose of the fallow-time, another conclusion will be reached. The purpose of the period was to allow the natural growth of vegetable matter and its decay to enrich the soil in the later ploughing. One cannot push such parallels too far, but surely the occasion of the jubilee and the months preceding might well be made a time of special effort in educating

the whole active and inactive constituency of the Bible Societies in the significance and nature of Bible Society work, its intensely practical character, and the urgencies which it faces. Let us lay a new groundwork, broader and deeper for the expansion which our work must make to meet the world's need.

Finally in this year of jubilee " proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." How mankind longs and struggles for liberty! And so often fails to find it, or finding it in one form—political or economic—loses or fails to gain it in another—its higher and spiritual aspect. This is the whole heart and centre of our work—that men may find the freedom which Christ has given to those who put their trust in Him. The Bible Societies' way of making this proclamation of liberty is to put the liberating Book into their hands. Let us redouble our efforts in this year of jubilee to set men free. Let us sound the trumpet of jubilee!

A RECALL TO THE BIBLE

GEORGE E. GRIEVE

IT is highly significant that when the British and Foreign Bible Society formulated the aims of its Third Jubilee to be celebrated in 1954, a decision was taken to 'focus attention on the Bible; what it says, as well as on the Bible Society and what it does.' This decision, made in the early months of 1950, later found expression as the second aim of the Jubilee Campaign—'to recall our own country—and countries overseas—to the central importance of the Bible and of Bible study.'

Although the decision to mark the occasion of the Third Jubilee in this way is of comparatively recent date, it indicates a conviction, long held, that there is a direct connection between the knowledge and love of the Word of God and the desire that it should be made widely known through the translation, production and circulation of the Scriptures. When conviction about the truths of God imparted by His Holy Spirit in meditation upon the Scriptures declines in the mind of the reader, sooner or later, conviction about their efficacy for others is also bound to suffer. In the succeeding months of discussion, it has been abundantly manifested that such a recall to the Bible is not only imperative but eagerly desired by leaders of the churches.

But it is one thing to formulate a decision of this kind, quite other to implement it in such a way that the proper distinction is drawn between a Society, which exists to distribute the Scriptures, and the churches whose responsibility it is to interpret them. The British and Foreign Bible Society has always preserved this distinction inasmuch as Bibles and portions are published without note or comment. How then was such a recall to be carried into effect? The answer has been given in the course of the last twelve months by the offer by the Bible Society of the occasion provided by its Third Jubilee celebrations, as an opportunity for the churches of Great Britain to recall our country to the central place the Bible should occupy in Christian discipleship and our national culture. This offer was made twelve months ago to the British Council of Churches and the leaders of the churches by which the Council is constituted. In its meeting at Belfast in April, 1952, the Council decided unanimously to inaugurate a nation-wide Recall to the Bible in the autumn of 1953. In Scotland the campaign will be guided by an *ad hoc* group established by representation from the churches in Scotland and the National Bible Society of Scotland, for the rest of the British Isles the first

initiative will lie with a special body drawn from the churches, the Bible Society, biblical scholars and interested members of the laity. Special bodies may later be established from Wales and Ireland so that the special idiom and rich native resource in language and culture of these members in the British family may be conserved.

The first meeting of the special *ad hoc* committee for England was held on 17th September. Some indication of the whole-heartedness of its membership is indicated by the fact that of 40 prominent scholars, leaders of the churches and the Bible Society who were invited to be members of the committee, 38 had assented to be foundation members. At the tenth anniversary meetings of the British Council of Churches in the following week, a leaflet entitled 'The Book for To-Day' was issued by members of the British Council of Churches and to seventy representatives of local Councils of Churches. This marks the first stage of the Recall to the Bible which received unanimous endorsement by the Council. The leaflet will later be distributed widely to the ministers and clergy and lay readers of the Churches. Detailed suggestions have been drawn up for the subject matter and organisation of 'Bible Weeks,' which it is hoped that Councils of churches will adapt to their own local situation. In all this, everything will depend upon effective preparation by Bible study, schemes of expository preaching and the inclusion of biblical topics in church week-day societies.

The Religious Division of the British Broadcasting Corporation is planning to use the year 1953-54 for broadcasts and feature programmes related to this special Bible emphasis and it is also anticipated that visual material will be available in exhibitions, plays, films and film strips.

All this will lead into the biblical preparation, now being planned for the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, Chicago, in August, 1954.

One major conviction lies at the heart of the project in so far as its details have been worked out, namely, that we have now reached a stage in the work of biblical scholarship over the last seventy years, when it is more than ever possible to know what the Bible says for itself in a positive rather than a negative way.

NEWS FROM ALL THE WORLD

Under this heading we do not intend to give only information on the Bible Societies, but we also want to include such facts as may or should have a bearing on Bible Society work. This information should therefore not only tell us what other Societies are doing, but should also help us to apprehend the whole realm of our common responsibilities and should lead us to think out how best we may extend our own activity in the future, in such a way as to fulfil our calling to the utmost.

Argentina

A new venture has just been initiated by the Bible Society agency in Buenos Aires : the first Talking Book Records for the blind and for sick and illiterate persons have just been issued. While only a beginning has been made, the agency hopes soon to complete the Sermon on the Mount, a selection of Psalms and the Gospel of John.

Austria

The Austrian Bible Committee held its annual meeting on September 21st. About 600 people attended the meeting and the collection (1,200 schillings) was more than double the amount raised last year. The main speaker was the leader of the Methodist Church in Switzerland, the Rev. D. F. Sigg. Mr. Karl Uhl, director of the Bible Society Agency in Vienna and H. Butschek, a colporteur of the Society, reported on some aspects of the work in Austria.

An immediate outcome of the meeting is reported as follows by a young girl who attended the reunion :

" Through the simple descriptions of the colporteur which nevertheless contained deep implications, a group of young people was so impressed that they decided that from now onwards they would make the particular matter of Bible distribution a much greater objective and would themselves help in bringing the Gospel to people. In impetuous enthusiasm they could not postpone their newly-made resolve, but wanted to carry out their plan that very same evening. The British and Foreign Bible Society had made available a number of Gospels for free distribution and so a group of about 8 boys and girls set out on the way home to distribute the Good News of Jesus Christ on the streets."

Belgium

The *Belgian Bible Society* now has its own Bible House in Brussels, at 34, rue d'Arlon.

Burma

On the occasion of a visit from the Rev. W. J. Bradnock, Translations Secretary of the B.F.B.S., returning from the Djakarta Conference (see Bulletin 11, p. 29), a conference of Bible translators was held in the Bible House in Rangoon from Thursday, 5th June, to Tuesday, 10th June which most of the translators now working in Assam and Burma and at present in the country were able to attend. This was the first conference of its kind held in the country and in view of the strategic importance of this whole area, its significance was very great.

An interesting feature of the conference was the contribution made by the Rev. Hau Go of the Tiddim Group of Chin languages and Mr. David Van Bik, who represented the Haka area.

In addition to sessions on lexical problems from the Gospel of St. Mark, valuable discussions were held on the basic texts used by the translators, on the various kinds of translational helps made available by the Bible Societies on the relation of the ' lingua franca ' to lesser languages in an area where whole Bibles already exist, and on the use of subject indexes. Two valuable sessions were held on the versions of the Burmese Bible and on the needs of new literates. These were open sessions and were attended by leaders of the Church in Burma.

The conference was chaired by U Ba Hlaing, an outstanding Christian lawyer and Church leader. The Translations Secretary of the A.B.S., Dr. E. A. Nida, was also able to attend some of the meetings.

Although the chief value of the conference was in bringing translators together in the sharing of mutual problems, some important resolutions were passed. In particular, it was decided to urge upon the Burmese Government the necessity of a through linguistic survey at the time of the next census.

Czechoslovakia

The Bible Department of the Comenius Theological Faculty in Prague (of the Presbyterian Church of the Czech Brethren) is preparing, with the help of 200 pastors and laymen, a Bible concordance in Czech. The work is being done on the basis of the original languages. This Department also plans the production of a Bible dictionary and commentaries.

East Africa

The Rev. F. J. Bedford reports that there are now seven Auxiliaries actively promoting the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society in East Africa. Their task is not only to raise funds, but also to encourage and supervise colportage work, as well as to keep the churches informed about developments in Bible work, translation, production and distribution of the Scriptures. Membership in the Society has also been initiated during the last twelve months and the aim is a total of 500 members at the end of 1953. There are at the moment about 120 registered members.

Seven colporteurs are at work in the area. "Their work," says Mr. Bedford, "has meant that many additional copies of the Scriptures have found their way into the homes of the people. Their task is not easy, but we feel that their work will increasingly supplement the endeavours of the bookshops. Distribution still remains the chief problem for those who would get Christian literature out to the people, and we must be prepared to experiment in new ways if we are to meet a growing need."

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His Excellency the Governor of Kenya, Sir Phillip Mitchell, addressing the Christian Council of Kenya recently, concluded his speech with these words, which were a telling testimony to the worth of the Scriptures :

"I have been trying to express to you how I see our current problems and perplexities after 17 years as a Governor and 40 years in the Colonial service. I said before in a public speech, and I do not think I can do better than to end by repeating it, that the task before us is to build, patiently and with faith, a Christian society and a Christian state, by which I meant what I have been trying to express to-day : and I added that I was without reservation confident that that was a task capable of achievement, especially as, when the way seemed dark or difficult to discern, *there was at hand a textbook for the business—the New Testament.* If seventeen years of high office have taught me anything, it is that."

England

In connection with the celebration in 1954 of the Third Jubilee of the B.F.B.S. and of Bible work throughout the world a popular history of the B.F.B.S. by Miss Mildred Cable and Miss Francesca French has just been issued.

In order to awaken the imagination of Christian people to the wonder of this sending forth of the Word of God in over 1,000 languages a series of 8 short books dealing with the history of the Bible in different parts of the world will also be published between now and the end of 1954. The first is ready now : *The Bible and China*, by W. H. Hudspeth (General Secretary of the B.F.B.S. in Canada and formerly in China). The second will be ready shortly—by Dr. Henry Bett, describing the spread of Christianity and the

Bible in north-east England ("Northumbria") from the earliest times to the nineteenth century. Others in preparation are: *The Bible in Korea and Japan* (J. C. F. Robertson); *The Bible in Central Africa* (F. J. Bedford); *The Bible in the Muslim Countries* (J. W. Sweetman); *The Bible in India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (Margaret Sinker). Another on South America and one on the Bible in the rest of Britain are under consideration.

*

The first copy of the new Union Swahili Bible left London for East Africa on 9th September by Comet jet aeroplane. It was handed to the captain at London Airport by an 11 year old member of the *British and Foreign Bible Society's* young people's organisation and it was received the same day in Entebbe (Uganda), the Comet's nearest touchdown.

50,000 copies of the Bible have been printed and despatched to all the centres of distribution in Africa. A second edition of 50,000 has already been ordered and others are planned. The present copies are sold by the B.F.B.S. at a loss of about 8/- on each.

The word 'Swahili' means 'language of the coast people' (from the Arabic word Sahil, a coast). It is the speech current along the East Coast of Africa from Somaliland to Mozambique. First spoken on the coast opposite Zanzibar—the centre of the age-old slave trade—it was carried by the slave traders right across Central Africa from east to west, and into the heart of what is now the Belgian Congo. It became the *lingua franca* and trade language of the whole of Central and East Africa and is one of the twelve most widely-ranging languages in the world. In the course of time it split up into various dialects and the new Union Swahili version of the Bible blends the three main branches—the Zanzibar or Southern, the Mombasa or Northern and the Inland or Western—into a harmonious speech which can be understood by all. The new Bible is the result of ten years' work by a Committee presided over by the Rev. Canon A. B. Hellier of the Universities Mission to Central Africa.

The first translator of the Swahili Scriptures was Dr. F. L. Krapf, who settled in Mombasa in 1844. Dr. Edward Steere, in making his great translations in the Zanzibar dialect, used Dr. Krapf's work as a foundation for his own. The B.F.B.S. published the New Testament in 1833 and the Old Testament in 1891. Many revisions and translations in various dialects have appeared in the past 100 years, and one of them—by Dr. K. Roehl—was published in 1937 by the Stuttgart Bible Society. This and other works have been the basis of the new revision.

The Rev. F. J. Bedford writes in this connection:

"Everywhere there is intense interest in the coming publication of the complete Bible in this language. It will be a great event in the life of East Africa, greater than is perhaps understood at present. Just as the Authorised Version of the Bible has moulded the literature and life of the English people, these Scriptures, when they arrive, will affect the lives of millions of people, from the coast halfway across the Continent to the Congo River. Already, there are plans afoot for great services of rejoicing when the first copies arrive. Enquiries come in from all kinds of people, and we can thank God for all those who have striven to produce these Scriptures in a common Swahili, not forgetting pioneers of translation like Dr. Krapf of Mombasa and Bishop Steere of Zanzibar."

*

In a short report on Youth House Parties, the Rev. B. J. Tidball, B.F.B.S. Secretary for Education and Youth, writes the following :

" What of the future—fear or faith ? To examine this vital question and seek the answer, two hundred young people—to quote several of them—' spent the happiest holiday ' of their lives at the Youth Summer House Parties sponsored by the British and Foreign Bible Society at Stover School, South Devon in August last. They came, these young people, from every part of Great Britain together with sojourners here from India, China, Japan, Africa, Bermuda, Morocco, Switzerland and France.

" In their early morning chapel sessions they studied the Bible records of the paralysis and destruction wrought by fear in human life and the liberating, life-giving power of faith. They surrendered their own fears and prayed for faith in the quiet moments set apart for private devotions. Here especially they came face to face with Jesus whose ' Name charms all our fears and bids our sorrows cease.' In formal lectures and discussions, the tremendous deeds of faith in the history of the Bible Society were examined and analyses made of the meaning and significance of faith in modern life. Afternoons were spent in swimming, playing games or exploring the glories of the Devon moors which literally surround Stover School. During the evenings, plays (written and performed by the young folk themselves) and films further illustrated the main theme and each day closed with an epilogue planned and conducted by the House Party members.

" What of the future—the future of these young disciples, the future of the Bible Society ? Can we be sure that the labours of faith of the Society's early founders will be repeated in the years that lie ahead ? The answer of the young people at Stover was clear and definite. Accepting their new Sower badges at the House Party Dedication Services, each one of them signed this undertaking : ' In wearing the Badge of the Youth Fellowship, I undertake to support the world-wide work of the Bible Society by regular prayer and Bible study, gift and service and by enlisting the interest of my friends.' As a pledge of their sincerity, they further undertook to sponsor the production of the Bible in Union Swahili at a cost of £4,000 and left behind them more than £100 in gifts and promises !

Ethiopia

Recently a new Amharic version of the Holy Bible was presented to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Haile Selassie at his palace in Addis Ababa. His Grace Archbishop Basilios and other dignitaries of Church and State, together with members of the Translation Committee, were present at the reception.

The revision was begun in February 1947, by a committee, consisting of four Ethiopian scholars in Geez, two Greek and Hebrew scholars, and four foreign scholars. The Committee worked in two groups, the one for the New Testament and the one for the Old Testament, and the work was printed at the Emperor's private press in Addis Ababa.

The liturgical language of Ethiopia is Geez (or Ethiopian) and the Scriptures in Geez have existed for many centuries. Geez was displaced by Amharic as the vernacular speech about 1300 A.D. The first Scriptures in Amharic appeared about 1824 when the B.F.B.S. published the Gospels, translated by Abu Rumi, an Ethiopian monk, under the supervision of M. Asselin de Cherville, the French Consul at Cairo.

When the present Emperor became Crown Prince and Regent of Ethiopia, he ordered the translation of the Scriptures into Amharic—in 1918—but most of the work done at that time was lost during the Italian invasion. A Bible in Amharic and Geez was published in London, however, shortly before the war. It is known as the Haile Selassie Bible. The present revision has been carried out solely in Ethiopia and is mainly the work of Ethiopian scholarship.

Germany

From 23rd-25th August the *Altenburg Bible Society*, celebrated its one hundredth anniversary. This Society is the only producing Bible Society located solely in the German Democratic Republic. In co-operation with the Berlin Bible Society (whose headquarters have just been removed from West Berlin to East Berlin), the Altenburg Society is going to set up the first edition of the antiqua German Luther Bible for school children. (It is in Roman type as Gothic type is no longer taught in schools in the German Democratic Republic).

In its earlier days, the Altenburg Bible Society used to order its Scriptures from other Societies, particularly from the von Canstein and later from the Stuttgart Society. After the second world war and in view of the difficulty of importing Scriptures from Western Germany, the Altenburg Bible Society began its own printing with the help of Stuttgart and foreign Societies (cf. BULLETIN 9, p. 25). About half of the circulation in Eastern Germany since the end of the war has come from Altenburg Bible Society presses.

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The illustrated book of the Acts of the Apostles, published in magazine format by the Altenburg Bible Society has now come off the press and has received an appreciative welcome in eastern Germany. Mention of it has been made in various daily papers.

The same Society has also produced large editions of attractively-bound Portions printed on paper trimmings left over from large sheets. These are in great demand and are being widely used in evangelistic work.

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Dr. E. Diehl, Director of the *Stuttgart Bible Society*, has sent in the following information about the work of his Society :—

" On 11th September, 1952, it was 140 years since the foundation of the Stuttgart Bible Society. A total of 39,000,000 copies of Holy Scripture have been sent out from Stuttgart during this time ; of these, two and a half million have been distributed in the years since the end of the last war. The demand for complete Bibles is very much greater than that for New Testaments or Bible portions.

" During the past year, i.e. from 1st July, 1951—30th June, 1952, the following Scriptures were distributed : 247,106 Bibles, 160,040 New Testaments, 88,788 Portions and 1,000 Braille Portions, making a total of 496,934 copies of Scripture. The figures for the previous year were : 207,719 Bibles, 129,904 New Testaments, 95,495 Portions and 500 Braille Portions, totalling 433,618. The figure for Portions also includes abridged Bibles for schools, a 400-page book which is used in many parts of Germany.

" The cheap ' Volksbibel ' is finding ready sales. Once again it now has, in addition to an 84-page appendix for Bible study, also 16 pages of maps and pictures from the Holy Land. These editions are particularly well received by the German people. The wedding Bible also has large distribution figures. More and more churches are acquiring the habit of handing a Bible to newly-wed couples at the altar. In Württemberg the Bible Society introduced this systematic Bible distribution already in the year 1852. The Bible should never be lacking in any newly-established home. We know full well that many of these Bibles are used only seldom or not at all. But the Bible is still there in the home, even if perhaps at first it is only there as a dumb witness to the Grace of God and its golden title on the cover ' Holy Bible,' does not fade and ever urges that it be taken in hand and read. And one day the time will surely come when this book will be taken down and will be able to serve the need of a human heart.

" The following are being prepared and should, if possible, be ready for Christmas : the first book of the Old Testament in the illustrated Stuttgart Bible edition, with twenty-two coloured pictures by Rudolf Schäfer. Furthermore, Stuttgart is preparing a very important critical edition : an introduction to the Biblia Hebraica from the pen of a professor at Tübingen University. This book will be a mine of information and a great help to anyone interested in the original text of the Bible.

" The 140th anniversary of the Bible Society closes with an important new publication. The New Testament in the Nias language for the island of Nias, on the west coast of Sumatra, has just appeared. The total edition runs to 25,000 copies. Of these, 15,000 will leave the Stuttgart Bible House during the next few weeks to be sent over to the distant island of Nias where God has done such great miracles. The young Nias church has about 160,000 members. For twelve years now the New Testament has been out of print. With longing, the people of Nias have been holding out their hands for this book ; now they will have it again for Christmas and will thank God for ' His unspeakable gift.'

" The edition of this Nias New Testament has been made in co-operation with the Netherlands Bible Society and the Union of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany. The financing of the edition has also been borne by them. The Rhenish Mission, which has always worked on the island of Nias, was able to send German missionaries there again a few weeks ago."

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On the occasion of the Church Day held in Stuttgart this year, the Stuttgart Bible Society set up a Bible exhibition on its premises, which was first of all opened to the visitors to the Church Day but will now form a permanent display. More than 2,000 valuable, interesting and historical Bible editions since the time of Luther and from all countries of the world, are set out systematically on tables in this museum. The first room, the ' Luther Room,' shows Bibles from the time of Luther, priceless treasures from the study of the Bible translator. In the second large room, the many-sidedness of Bible production in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is displayed to the visitor. A third room shows about 100 German Bible translations apart from the Luther translation. Here the New Testament by Philipp Jacob Spener, the founder of the German Pietistic movement and that of the Swabian Bible scholar Johann Albrecht Bengel, are of particular interest. In room four are numbers of original texts in Hebrew, Latin and Greek, priceless documents. And

finally, room five shows the Bible in all the world : more than 300 Bible translations are here set out for the visitor. All the rooms are attractively decorated with illustrated panels on the walls. There are panels with old manuscripts, statistics, and portraits of the founders of Bible printing. And in the missionary room, interesting pictures on the wall show us the life of distant brothers and sisters who have come to the Faith.

12-13,000 people visited the exhibition during the five days of the *Kirchentag* (Church Day). In connection with this exhibition, visits of half-an-hour to the printing and binding works of the Stuttgart Bible Society were organised for groups of about 50. More than 100 such tours took place during the *Kirchentag*.

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The *Berlin Bible Society* is working on the production of a vest-pocket Testament, the first to be produced in eastern Germany since the war. The edition will run to 30,000 copies.

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The *von Canstein Bible Institute*, which was for many years associated with the Berlin Bible Society, has again become autonomous and has its headquarters in Witten in western Germany. The Berlin Society is to confine its work to eastern Germany ; the von Canstein Bible Institute will supply areas of north-west Germany which formerly ordered Scriptures from Berlin. The von Canstein Bible Institute was founded in 1710 ; it was the first institution in the world concerned with the production of inexpensive copies of the Scriptures and was, in that sense, a forerunner of the Bible Society movement.

Hongkong

The Hongkong Bible House has moved its offices and is now at 304, Gloucester Buildings, Hongkong, where the accommodation is much less crowded.

Hungary

The *Hungarian Bible Council* has completed the tentative edition of all the books of the New Testament in the new revised translation. The chairman of the Council writes in this connection : " We are already receiving numerous contributions and comments from readers of the Bible, so that the work of our special commission can really be submitted to the criticism and correction of all Hungarian Protestants and in this way, the revision will receive its final form in so far, of course, as one can speak of a ' final ' form, in such a work."

The Old Testament revision commission continues to meet regularly. The Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and I and II Samuel, are being prepared for the press and will soon be published in separate instalments for the tentative edition. The books of the Kings and Chronicles are nearing completion.

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The circulation figures for Hungary in 1951, which did not arrive in time to be included in the last issue of the BULLETIN, are as follows : 18,612 Bibles, 7,740 New Testaments, 9,485 Portions, total 35,837 (1950 total : 35,518).

India

News has arrived of a team, including Mr. P. Mahanty, General Secretary of the *Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, the Rt. Rev. Bishop G. Sinker of Nagpur (formerly General Secretary of the B.S.I.P.C.) and Mr. and Mrs. Bose, who are both active supporters of the Calcutta auxiliary of the Bible Society, which—during the end of April and beginning of May—toured Assam. This province of the Indian Republic is in the remote North-East corner of the sub-continent, on the borders of Burma and behind Eastern Pakistan.

During the last 60 years the churches there have progressed by leaps and bounds, particularly among the hill tribes, several of which have been converted to Christianity almost to a man. These people show great missionary zeal, bringing the Gospel to the wild tribes which inhabit the vaguely-defined border of India and Burma. Difficult problems exist there for the Bible Society, for there are about 30 major tribes and a large number of smaller ones, but no common tongue or related language. Only one tribe, so far, has the Bible in its own language ; several have New Testaments, others only Portions. Others, up till now, have no book of the Bible at all. Much translation work has to be done, many new editions have to be published, and it was essential for the B.S.I.P.C. to study the problems on the spot and consult with the missionaries and churches concerned.

One immediate result of this visit was the formation of a Bible Society branch and a Women's Auxiliary in Shillong, as well as the enlisting of many new friends and supporters for the Bible Society all over Assam. A new impulse has been given to translation work and fresh encouragement to the B.S.I.P.C. leaders.

Bishop Sinker, in closing his account of the tour, summarises his impressions as follows :

" Here then is a part of the world where the Bible, or as much as they have of the Bible, is loved and studied and meditated upon and used, as much as perhaps anywhere else in the world. It should surely be a No. 1 priority for all lovers of the Kingdom, and of the Bible Society as the handmaid of the Kingdom, to see that each of these hill tribes gets the complete Bible in their own language as soon as possible. They deserve it for their own sakes, but it may well be the key to the evangelisation of the whole of Northern India."

Ireland

The recent publication by the *Hibernian Bible Society* of the New Testament in modern Irish, completes a project started many years ago, since the only other translation by William O'Donnell in 1602, had in the course of time become archaic and difficult to read.

In 1932 the Society published the Gospel of St. Mark in modern Irish, being the first to appear in the present-day translation. It was followed by the other Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in separate portions. This translation was the work of the late Mr. Ernest Joynt, a noted Irish scholar. These portions received the height of praise from the former president of Ireland, the late Dr. Douglas Hyde, himself a leading Irish speaker.

After these portions had been issued, Mr. Joynt began the translation of the rest of the New Testament, which he finished shortly before his death. The main revision of the proofs was undertaken by the Rev. C. W. C. Quin, with whom Mr. Joynt had earlier consulted.

This New Testament is being sold at production cost in accordance with the regulations of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES. The price is 16/- plus 1/- postage for book post abroad.

Japan

On the occasion of the political amnesty granted at the time of the signing of the Peace Treaty 10,000 copies of the New Testament were given by the *Japan Bible Society* to those who were released from prison. The distribution was made through the churches located near the prisons.

*

85% of Bible circulation in Japan last year was achieved by colportage.

*

Dr. and Mrs. E. A. Nida (Dr. Nida is Translation Secretary of the American Bible Society), spent six weeks with the two revision committees of the Japan Bible Society during the summer, helping them in their work of translating the Scriptures into the language of the people (see BULLETIN No. 5, pp. 29-30).

The Old Testament committee has completed the first four books of the Bible ; and the New Testament committee has completed the Synoptic Gospels and the Epistle to the Romans. It is planned that the work should be finished by the Spring of 1954.

*

The Japan Bible Society has sent three trained colporteurs to Rishiri and Rebun Islands off Hokkaido Northern Island. These two small islands have not previously been visited by colporteurs and there are no churches there. The Scriptures have been warmly received by the islanders, according to the colporteurs' reports. The leaders of the island took them to the shrine festival and introduced them to make a speech and distribute the Scriptures.

Korea

Bible Clubs have been organised in 25 churches in Seoul, as part of a national programme. The leader is usually a pastor's widow or an unemployed Church leader. The lessons run for three hours every morning six days a week. Grammar school subjects are also taught.

Netherlands

At the Annual Meeting of the *Netherlands Bible Society* in Amsterdam, J. C. H. Heldring, a Dutch Reformed layman who is director of the Curaçao Trading Co., was elected President to succeed Professor F. W. Grosheide, who resigned after 40 years with the Society, the last 10 as its President. The Society's yearbook reveals that the number of contributing members has increased by 7,000 to a total of over 130,000. Its activities are on a larger scale than ever. Since printing costs have risen greatly, the treasurer asked for more members and more contributions. During the past year the Society sold more than 100,000 copies of the Bible and more than 20,000 copies of the New Testament in the new translation. Many more are to be printed. New translations are also being prepared in the Indonesian languages and old ones are to be reprinted. As the meeting ended, an interesting Bible exposition opened in Amsterdam's New Church.

North Africa

Two missionaries of the ' Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel ' recently visited the Jewish population in Tunisia and Algeria and sold and distributed over 1,500 Hebrew-French New Testaments within two months. The missionaries said, however, that they found the ground very hard there.

Norway

At the Annual Meeting of the *Norwegian Bible Society*, Professor Didrik Arup Seip, famous Norwegian linguist, presented evidence that the Bible was translated into Norwegian as early as 1140. He has discovered that several quotations from the Bible in old sermons and religious writings are worded exactly alike, and therefore must derive from an identical source. Moreover, he found the same quotations in a history of the world which dates from 1140. Such identity of wording cannot be explained unless all the quotations came from the same translation. Professor Seip thinks it possible that the Bible, or at least part of it had been rendered into Norwegian even earlier than the twelth century, perhaps in the days of Olaf the Holy, around the year 1000.

Pakistan

The Rev. Chandu Ray, secretary in Pakistan of the *Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, writes that the Sindhi translation committee this summer completed the translation of the Old Testament. The setting of the books in type by the printer is to start as soon as the necessary equipment has arrived.

The first part of the Gurmukhi Bible, up to the books of the Chronicles, is also ready and has been sent to the printer in Calcutta. It is hoped that the translation of the remaining books will be completed in 1954.

The revised edition of the Punjabi (Persian) New Testament is off the press. Translators are now working on the Old Testament. A tentative duplicated edition of Genesis is being prepared and will be circulated among Christian leaders and experts for suggestions and criticisms.

*

" The printing," writes Mr. Ray, " of the second edition of the Tibetan Bible in India is causing us much anxiety, as innumerable hitches have occurred from the technical point of view. We also know that the Enemy of souls will be active, even as he was active when we printed the first edition. So will you please undertake to pray the second edition through. We have hardly any Bibles and only about 400 New Testaments left from the first edition."

*

A special effort to encourage Bible distribution in Pakistan was made on the occasion of the United Pastors' Retreat, at which 75 pastors and about a dozen missionaries were present. 'Every pastor a colporteur' was the challenge placed before those attending the retreat. As a follow-up, every pastor received a bundle of 160 books, valued at 20 rupees, of which the recipient was asked to pay half. " Thus," says Mr. Ray, " we are getting the Scriptures into the villages of Pakistan."

Persia

Recent events in Persia have not made the work of the colporteurs in any way easier, but rather more difficult. One of them stationed in a famous town reports on a three-weeks tour with the Church evangelist :

" We have had many difficulties and with the greatest of effort have been able to sell only 252 copies of Scripture. They were preventing our work everywhere and in many places the police were instructed to confiscate our books. The sale of Scriptures in this part of Persia has been made almost impossible by reason of the intense propaganda."

Scotland

75,000 copies of the new Efik Bible came off the press in Edinburgh last June. The edition had already been completely sold out before it had been printed. A second edition of 50,000 copies has already been ordered.

The Efik Bible was the very first to be published by the *National Bible Society of Scotland* in an African language. The first translations were made by the Rev. Hugh Goldie and the Rev. Alexander Robb of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland Mission, the Bible being completed in 1868. Fairly recently, under government leadership, the alphabet in which Efik is written, was slightly altered. Certain letters which had diacritical marks above them, were dropped and new letters introduced. It thus became necessary to reset the entire Bible and in doing so, the opportunity was taken of making slight corrections so far as spelling and orthography are concerned. Otherwise, the Old Testament remained as it was. In the New Testament, Dr. J. T. Dean's latest revision has been incorporated.

*

Under the title ' That the World May Know,' the National Bible Society of Scotland has just issued its history in the form of a pageant in ten episodes. This pageant was first presented at the time of the Bible Society exhibition in 1950. It is the work of a team based on a draft prepared by the Rev. Dr. W. C. Somerville, General Secretary of the N.B.S.S. The history of the Bible Society is divided into two parts ; firstly, the Bible in Scotland from Iona to the Reformation ; secondly, the Bible in the world, evoking the launching of the Bible Society movement in 1804 and its fruit throughout the world : the Bible in many languages, to the remotest parts of the earth.

*

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the N.B.S.S. held on 14th July, a preliminary account was given of plans to inaugurate a ' Recall to the Bible ' scheme in connection with the 150th anniversary of the founding of the first Bible Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society. The N.B.S.S. would co-operate whole-heartedly, and steps were being taken in consultation with the Scottish Churches' Ecumenical Committee, to call together a representative body to prepare details such as might commend themselves to the churches and provide a means whereby the scheme might have a real influence on the life and witness of church members, and also of many others at present outside the churches.

South Africa

The General Synodical Commission of the Dutch Reformed Church Cape Province passed a resolution, requesting all the congregations under its jurisdiction to observe Sunday, 13th August, 1953, as a day of thanksgiving " for the establishment of the B.F.B.S. and its invaluable services in the extension of Christ's Kingdom." The Moderators of Natal, Orange Free State and the Transvaal are considering the adoption of a similar resolution.

Moreover, the Dutch Reformed Sunday Schools in the four provinces have agreed to set aside the Sunday nearest 7th March, 1954 (the birthday of the B.F.B.S.) as a Bible Society Sunday when the lesson will deal with the history of the B.F.B.S.

Switzerland

Every Monday during the last two months of the year, the German-speaking radio network in Switzerland will be giving half an hour of ' Introduction to the Bible.' Pastor E. Kellerhals, former inspector of the Basle Mission, has been made responsible for these broadcasts.

United States of America

Americans of the Evangelical, Catholic and Jewish faiths, have been celebrating a Bible Week together from 28th September to 5th October. In more than 3,000 religious communities special meetings were announced in which the Holy Scriptures were to be presented and their effect shown on the national inheritance of the United States.

On the same occasion a stamp was issued by the Post Office in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Gutenberg Bible, the first book ever printed on movable type. The Rev. Dr. E. M. North was one of the three speakers in Washington, D.C., on 30th September, when the issuance of the new Gutenberg stamp was officially recognised. Dr. North's address was on " The English Version of the Bible." Dr. Ward Jackson of the Houghton Library of Harvard University spoke on " The Place of the Gutenberg Bible in the History of Printing." " The text of the Gutenberg Bible " was presented by the Rev. Edward F. Siegman of the Catholic University of America.

The ceremony was held in Coolidge Hall in the Library of Congress. Mr. O. A. Pearson, Assistant Postmaster General, presented each of the speakers with a folio of Gutenberg stamps.

*

Packets of material to be used in the ninth annual observance of World-wide Bible Reading programme, sponsored each year by the American Bible Society, have been mailed to more than 100,000 Protestant pastors of fifty different denominations. The theme chosen this year is " The Word of Life." For several years, in addition to the regular material prepared especially for the use of the pastor on Universal Bible Sunday, the Society has included in the packet a news release giving information on the programme, with space for the pastor to add details on the local participation.

The National Sponsoring Committee of the Bible Reading programme is headed by President Harry S. Truman.

For the first time this year, the Bible Society will provide the reading lists in Braille, so that the blind too may join the many thousands of daily readers following this programme.

The Small Volume of Scripture Passages for the blind in both Turkish and Armenian Braille have just been published by the American Bible Society. It contains, among other favourite passages, the twenty-third Psalm, the Sermon on the Mount and the 13th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. This volume in Arabic is now on the press.

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Upon the invitation of the National Broadcasting Company, the A.B.S. was invited this summer to present a Bible Quiz programme on WNBT, the Television outlet of the Broadcasting Company. The programme began on Sunday, 20th July and was given under the title " Know Your Bible." The Bible Society prepared the sets of questions which were presented on each programme. The Quiz master was one of New York City's leading Presbyterian pastors.

The viewing audience were offered free for the asking a copy of a list of the 100 best-known stories of the Bible and where they may be found, this list being published by the A.B.S. The " fan mail " has been, in the estimation of the Broadcasting Company, unusually encouraging.

This is the first time a Bible Quiz has been a regular weekly feature of a Television programme.

■

Arrangements have been made for the A.B.S. to send 160,000 copies of a Korean illustrated Gospel of Luke to Korea. The books will be turned over to the Rev. Young Bin Im of the Korean Bible Society in Pusan, for distribution to Korean public schools and Sunday schools. These Gospels have been produced in the new spelling (Han Kuhl), a simplified form of the language and used by the government in schools.

*

The following is extracted from an editorial in 'Missions,' an international Baptist magazine published in the U.S.A. :

" A recent nation-wide survey reported that 90% of American homes possess at least one Bible and that, before they were 15 years old, 70% of the American people had received Bibles. New or old, in versions of yesterday, of 341 years ago, of today, these millions of Bibles must be read. Unless the Bible is read, all this prodigious effort in scholarship, translation, printing and distribution, is in vain. The precepts and teachings of the Bible must be lived. Its revelation of God and the way of life offered in its pages, must be accepted. The Bible is often misunderstood, frequently misinterpreted, repeatedly rejected ; yet it remains the Book of Life. He who reads it finds in it the only way of life that can satisfy the needs and yearnings of our perplexed, terrified, broken world. Its message is as relevant, timely, and as desperately needed now as it was when God inspired the men who wrote its immortal pages. "

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With the title 'On the Wings of the Word—the Bible Story around the World,' Dr. R. H. Sharp is going to publish a series of articles on 'the Bible's enlightening work among the people of the six continents.' Dr. Sharp has begun a one year trip around the world in order to collect first-hand material.

The *American Bible Society* has issued a new series of portions in English. The four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles have been printed with attractive illustrated covers, in easily readable type. The text is that of the Revised Standard Version.

■

" God's Word in Man's Language " is a new book about the problems facing Bible translators, by Dr. Eugene A. Nida, Secretary for Translations of the American Bible Society. It is published by Harper & Brothers, New York at $2.50 per copy. The following is a review of this valuable book by John Stirling, Librarian of the British and Foreign Bible Society :

" Finding the right word : that is the translator's problem. It is the headache and heartache of every translator of the Scriptures. But how does he set about solving it ? How does he find the word in a language he does not know that will rightly and adequately express the news-message from God that it is his burden to deliver ?

" If you would know the answer, get hold of the book ' God's Word in Man's Language.' It has been written by a man who knows the story from the inside ; who knows the people who are doing the job ; and who, as the Translation Secretary of the American Bible Society, sees through the press the precious manuscripts that have been prepared. Dr. Eugene A. Nida is a man of learning and wide experience. His life is devoted to the production of Scripture in the different languages of the peoples of the world. He writes with authority, and with a grace of style that makes delightful reading. He also has the rare gift of making his narrative a human document, as rich in moving incident as life itself.

" His illustrations of the struggle to find the right local word for the ancient Scriptural word are drawn direct from the field. They are well chosen, and will make a wide appeal. But on first acquaintance some of the accepted words and phrases, when translated for our understanding, seem to be far removed from our reading of the Bible until their significance is explained. Then one is surprised how often the new and strange word enriches or lights up the meaning of the original. As the examples pile up, the impression grows that the daily life of these foreign people is producing words which like windows let new light into the sacred text. We are, however, so used to the idea that life is to be interpreted by the Bible, that it rarely occurs to us it may be equally true that the Bible is to be interpreted by life, as is so abundantly proved by this volume.

" Let no one imagine the whole of Dr. Nida's book is on these lines. This particular feature has been emphasised because it is an aspect of translation work which is so rarely made available to the general reader, and has here been so very well done. But his book contains much more than this. It brings together in one volume the many different aspects of this work which are usually dealt with separately. It contains, for example, a brief but complete, if not exhaustive, historical survey of Bible translation throughout the Christian Era. And it gives, on pages that will repay careful study, an exposition, in the light of modern scholarship, of the great work of the Divine revelation. It takes the student to the libraries of the scholars and gives him more than a passing glance at the work that is being done today on the ancient Greek and Hebrew manuscripts for the better understanding of the Scriptures, and the better rendering of God's Word into man's language.

" Thank you, Dr. Nida, for an illuminating and inspiring volume. You have rendered inestimable service to all Bible workers."

United Bible Societies

The October issue of THE BIBLE TRANSLATOR, the quarterly published by the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, for people engaged in the translation or revision of the Scriptures, is a special, large number devoted to the discussions and findings of the Bible translators' Conference held in Djakarta, Indonesia, under the auspices of the Netherlands Bible Society in co-operation with the Indonesian Bible Society, from 17th-31st May.

The twenty-two sessions attended by missionaries, pastors and representatives of the Bible Societies, were carried on mostly in Dutch, but interpreters were provided for those who did not understand that language. In addition to representatives of the Netherlands and Indonesian Bible Societies, there were present the Translation Secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society, the Rev. Wilfred J. Bradnock and Dr. Eugene A. Nida, with Mrs. Nida. There were discussed a most interesting variety of problems of particular concern to those engaged in the translation of the Scriptures in Indonesia and the other languages of the area. The present social and political conditions in Indonesia make the use of Indonesian of great importance and demand the very best translation in that language, if the local church is to be able to meet opposing influences. There was expressed a strong feeling that the local churches could and should play a great part in providing translators and in improving translations, and also that good translations in the languages of the people serve to unite various language groups rather than to divide them.

Because of the strong Moslem influence in this part of the world, there are special difficulties in the use of terms for 'God,' other divine names and religious terms. Then there is also in a number of languages the tradition of heroic and religious poetry. How much of these traditional forms can be adapted to biblical usage is a matter for serious study.

It was agreed that at present it was undesirable to try and produce an Indonesian translation of the Bible that would serve both Indonesia and Malaya, and it was accordingly requested that the present Bode text be revised to make it more truly Indonesian. The Bible Societies related to work in this area were urged to stimulate thorough linguistic training of young Indonesian Christians for Bible translating, to help the churches to realise the importance of the preparation and continuance, through revision, of good translations, and to prepare a revision of the whole Bible in Indonesian as soon as possible.

Miscellaneous

The Lutheran World Federation held its Assembly in Hannover last August. We quote the following passages from the concluding report of the fifth section which dealt with work among youth :

" We have learned with great joy, from the reports of the various countries, that the young Church is definitely putting the Bible at the heart of its living and thinking. It is seeking a Church of the living Word in order to find the right direction for its life. We are certain that youth, which is asking such questions, wants more than cheap assurance, that it is seeking the power for service and surrender, and that it wants to be the earnest follower of Jesus . . . . . .

" The churches can help young people to understand the Scriptures rightly as the source of life by deepening the knowledge of the key to the Scriptures . . . . . The churches can help young people to come to a better knowledge of the Scriptures."

THE BIBLE IN ARGENTINA

CHARLES W. TURNER

JANUARY of 1948 marks the beginning of a new period in the history of the British and American Bible Societies in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. Up to that date they worked as separate organisations. From that date they came together under a unified field administration. This new policy has meant a great deal to the spirit and progress of the work. Rapid advance on all fronts has been possible and our work has gained a firmer place in the total structure of the evangelical effort of these lands.

With reference to Argentina, for example, the largest and most important country in the River Plate field, the first year of unified work—the year 1948—produced a Scripture circulation of 24,277 Bibles, 31,540 New Testaments and 290,267 Gospels. Local contributions amounted to $6,866.70 Argentine pesos. These figures, it might be mentioned in passing, represent a good average of the total output and local income of both Societies while working *separately* in Argentina. The results in the similar categories for the year 1951,—the fourth year of the united work—were markedly higher : 49,676 Bibles, 49,745 New Testaments and 757,825 Gospels. Local contributions amounted to $87,558.67 Argentine pesos.

Besides this horizontal development whereby an increasing number of Scriptures have been placed in the hands of the Argentine people, through old and new channels, there has also been a notable vertical growth. This vertical development, or deepening of the consciousness of our constituency concerning the essential place of the Bible in the local church and in its evangelistic activity, has been aided greatly by the formation early in 1949 of the Advisory Council of the united work. This Council is an interdenominational body of twenty-six members gathered from the principal Protestant denominations in our field. It is the most solidly ecumenical body in Argentina, for around the Bible and the work of the Bible Societies in making it available, denominational differences disappear and all groups come together. Its chief objectives can be summarised under one heading : Development of interest in the Bible and in its larger distribution. It is obvious that with an active body such as this, definitely interested in promoting the expansion of the Bible Societies' work and purpose, progress should readily be reflected in clearer understanding of, and deeper sympathy with, the aims and claims of the Societies themselves.

Another factor which has aided decisively in producing the vertical development referred to above, has been the formation of Regional Auxiliary Committees in strategic centres throughout the land. The formation of these Committees commenced three years ago, and before the end of 1950 fifteen had been organised in key cities in Argentina. Like the Advisory Council, the Regional Auxiliary Committees are also interdenominational bodies. They have a membership which varies between fifteen and thirty, but all the Committees could bring together about four hundred persons deeply interested in the work of the Bible Societies and committed to help the Bible cause and Scripture distribution in all ways and by all means possible. The specific objectives of these groups are essentially the same as those of the Advisory Council, to which they are related, and they serve as vital extensions —literally, long arms—by means of which the Bible Societies, together with their plans, their methods, programmes and purposes, are brought close to all areas far distant from the Buenos Aires headquarters, and through which the Societies can maintain intimate contact and operate effectively. For example,

in the sphere of local support these Regional Auxiliary Committees have played an important part since their inception, in securing contributions for our work. Through their efforts at least 3,500 gifts annually during each of the last two years have been secured from individual contributors. It is expected that each successive year will see a substantial increase in the number of these contributions as well as in the total volume of gifts.

The great value of this decentralisation resides in the fact that through it a deepening of understanding has been, and will continually be, secured over a nation-wide area concerning a Christian's responsibility, first, in respect of the Bible and the place it should occupy in the life of the individual and of the Church ; and second, in relation to the work of the Bible Societies which for so many decades have done all within their power to make the Bible readily accessible to the people of Argentina.

In the light of this marked progress during the last four years, it is of interest to inquire as to some of the specific emphases which have helped achieve it. Building, as we all necessarily do, upon foundations laid by many others before us, and recognising the cumulative value of all these past contributions, we would affirm that the advances of the last quadrennium are largely due to ceaseless emphasis on three essential factors.

The first of these is the spiritual purpose of our work. There is a real sense in which the work of colportage in its various present-day forms uniquely represents the spiritual purpose of the Societies' mission. The sale of a copy of Scripture is not an end in itself. It is a means to something far beyond the mere sale. The real objective, as we all know, is that men shall come to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. This is the reason why it is essential to have persons qualified *spiritually* for the task of Scripture distribution. Routine sales talk is not sufficient, nor does it realise the prime objective. The spiritual aim of the work involves that, as far as is possible, the utmost will be done to have the illuminating message of Scripture revelation passed from the hand to the mind and heart of the recipient. It is, therefore, not the sale of a book that we seek, but rather the dissemination of a vital means to a new way of life. And this type of work requires apostolic consecration, vision and tenacity. " We don't always find it easy to get the Bible into the hands of the people," wrote one of our full-time colporteurs recently, " but when we do it proves itself to be a Light and Guide."

Our staff of full-time Bible Society colporteurs necessarily is very small. A large staff would be far too costly. Hence, we have devised the plan of encouraging pastors, missionaries and lay workers to undertake colportage in connection with their regular ecclesiastical activities. Valuable work has been done during these years by a growing number of part-time colporteurs, and also by a group we have named special colporteurs: men specially appointed to the work of colportage by a local church, or by a group of churches in a given district, or by a denomination. There are today forty such persons engaged actively in our work in Argentina. By far the largest part of our colportage is performed by these two groups—a work which could not be done without their co-operation. Last year, for instance, they distributed over 20,000 Bibles, more than 22,000 New Testaments and 550,000 Gospels, which represents well over half of the total circulation for the year. Co-operation of this fruitful type is essential to the expansion of our work so that a constantly growing proportion of funds can be freed and put into Scripture production.

The second factor we have emphasised strongly in Argentina, with excellent results, is the real need for active participation by local churches

and their memberships in the work of evangelism by means of Scripture distribution. We have insisted that this work is not the exclusive responsibility of the Bible Societies, or of pastors and missionaries. It is the responsibility of every church member who would give reasonable expression to his profession of Christian discipleship, and do his part in the total evangelistic effort of the Church.

Little by little results from reiterated emphasis are being seen. Our files contain an encouraging number of letters from men and women who have felt they would like to make a start in this worthy work. Some have even referred to it as constituting " a new beginning in their Christian life," which at least reveals the depth of their motive. But not only are laymen becoming impressed with the importance of this work. More and more pastors are urging their congregations to undertake Scripture distribution in the interest of successful personal evangelism, and to this end are offering short training courses. Several have personally consulted the Bible Society as to the best method of doing the work, and have been provided with our appropriate leaflets Others have written requesting them. Many local churches have been remarkably successful in this new sphere of activity. The pastor of one of the largest churches of Buenos Aires, for example, reports that most of the members of his church are regularly active in the work of personal evangelism by means of Scripture distribution. The membership is visibly increasing as a result of these efforts.

There are thousands of communities in Argentina that would be immeasurably blessed by the earnest evangelistic activity of local church memberships. In unchurched areas, which abound, this extremely effective work prepares the ground admirably for the eventual emergence of Bible-study groups which, in turn, constitute the firm basis upon which local churches can later be built.

Increasingly we are becoming convinced that the true centre upon which depends the solid expansion of the Bible Societies, and their integration into the full life of the Younger Churches of these lands, is *the local church.* The local church composed of the community of believers, whether rural or urban, is the unique religious unit which is strategically placed. Members of the local church are at the outset potential distributors of the Holy Scriptures through the opportunity offered by the service of personal evangelism. Local churches, therefore, must more and more be helped to realise that through this essential work performed by members of their own circle they are extending their own church's influence, contributing to the spiritual upbuilding of their own membership, and rendering a permanent contribution to the entire evangelical cause in their own land. In the final analysis, the vitality, power and vision of the whole Church is dependent on the vitality, power and vision of the local church.

The time has come for the local churches to capture anew the vision of the vast unchurched throngs of men and women, some totally indifferent to the claims of Jesus Christ, and others wistfully in search of some higher loyalty than they yet know on which they might place their trust with assurance. Each local church must be helped to come alive with evangelistic fervour and be a power-house capable of inspiring its members to go out in quest of those who are indifferent and ignorant concerning spiritual things. And in this day perhaps the largest and most vital contribution the Bible Societies can make toward the richer fulfilment of their own historic purpose in these lands is to emphasise increasingly the importance of evangelism by means of Scripture distribution as an essential activity of the whole local church.

The third factor to which we have given strong emphasis in Argentina is the need for building the indispensable organisational structure looking toward complete financial support of our work. Here, as we have pointed out elsewhere, the co-operation of the Regional Auxiliary Committees has been as significant as it has in relation to other aspects of our work. This, obviously, has been an essential development, since no aspect of Christian missionary work can truly be said to be taking permanent root in any new field unless it is gaining the gradually increasing material as well as spiritual support of the constituency.

Much interest and earnestness have been evident in many quarters during the quadrennium in relation to gifts to our work, and very substantial progress has been made. Almost daily the mails bring to our headquarters contributions from individual friends, local churches, denominational offices, or one or another of the Regional Auxiliary Committees. One of the most encouraging features is the fact of growing denominational consciousness of the need for more adequate support of the Bible Societies. It is of real interest to learn that not many months ago the following letter was sent to all its local churches by the headquarters of one of the largest denominations in Argentina: " It is surely not necessary for us to explain how much we owe to the Bible Societies that provide us with the Scriptures we need for our personal use and for our Church's work. Have we ever stopped to consider what our situation would be but for these institutions ? As a Church, until last year (1950) we have done next to nothing to help the Bible Societies in their continual labour of love. Let us urge our members and congregations to give liberally in support of this great work."

Little by little the indispensable financial foundation is being firmly laid. Christian privilege, and its inevitable counterpart, Christian responsibility, are helping to lead the Argentine constituency to a deeper and more fruitful understanding of the need for undergirding the work of the Bible Societies with an adequate financial basis which shall eventually develop into complete self-support.

HONGKONG BIBLE HOUSE

David McGavin

DURING 1948, as the Communist forces in China gained control of more and more territory, it became obvious that, in due course, they would also control Shanghai. What would this mean for the work of the Bible Societies ? For many years Scriptures for use in China and in other far eastern lands, in Mandarin and in many dialects, had been produced in Shanghai. It was imperative that this work should continue, yet it was then unknown whether it would be possible to continue in Communist governed territory. To judge by the experience of other countries drawn within the " Curtain," it seemed wise to make other plans. Accordingly, the Executive Committee (largely Chinese) of the China Bible House (the name under which the British and Foreign Bible Society, the American Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland carried on their united work in China) decided that one of the two western secretaries then in Shanghai should move to Hongkong to explore the possibility of producing Scriptures in that port and, if necessary, to arrange for production there.

On arrival in Hongkong, the first problem to be solved was that of finding office accommodation. Hongkong, even to a greater extent than most other important cities all over the world, was overcrowded and large sums were being paid, as key-money, to secure either living or office accommodation. Fortunately, the Directors of the Bible Book and Tract Depot, which for many years had acted as local agents, first for the British and Foreign Bible Society and later for China Bible House, generously offered space in their already crowded premises, and there, in 1949, with a borrowed desk, a portable typewriter and no office staff, the secretary began his work. Fortunately too, the Bible Societies already had in Hongkong a goodly stock of both Bible paper and newsprint which had been ordered for Shanghai but, because of political conditions, had been unable to reach that port and had been unloaded at Hongkong.

Late in 1949, the first copies of the Gospels and Acts in Chinese were ready for delivery and early in 1950 the first Bibles came off the press. In many parts of South East Asia there already was a famine of Scriptures in Chinese and so great was the demand for complete Bibles that for a very considerable time no printing order completely bound was delivered as a single unit. As soon as certain quantities were bound, they were shipped immediately to various destinations where they were eagerly awaited.

Since the work began, the production of the printed Word has gone on without ceasing and only now can it be said that the original urgency has been met and that the more normal requirements are being filled. In all, from the beginning of the work, at the end of 1949, until the present time, August 1952, there have been published 28 editions of the Bible, 12 editions of the New Testament and 9 editions of Portions, mostly the four Gospels and Acts ; a total of 143,880 Bibles, 246,175 New Testaments and 2,096,000 Portions, making a grand total of 2,485,975 books. Most of these are in Kuoyu (Mandarin), the Chinese national language, but they also included the following :

Amoy dialect (Romanised) : 4,000 Bibles. The Amoy dialect is the language of Formosa and the strength of the Church there is largely the result of having the Scriptures in a romanised form, easy to learn.

Hua Lisu : 10,000 New Testaments and Psalms and 3,000 copies of St. Mark's Gospel. Hua Lisu is the name of a large tribe found in Yunnan Province and northern Burma. This language also is in romanised form. The original translation had been revised and, this being the first publication of the revision, one of the revisers came to Hongkong to see the book through the press. The book of Psalms which was included was printed for the first time. For this production the type had first to be made.

Eastern Lisu : 3,000 New Testaments. The Eastern Lisu also is a large tribe found in Yunnan Province and for their written language the Pollard script is used—a script composed of rectangular symbols. Formerly, only three Portions had been printed in this tongue. Thus the complete New Testament was published for the first time. For this book also the type had first to be made.

Bunnun : 3,000 copies of St. Matthew's Gospel. The Bunnun tribe is one of the aboriginal tribes inhabiting the mountains of Formosa. A Formosan pastor, who had worked among them for a few years, reduced their language to writing in a romanised form and the Gospel of Matthew is the first book the people have seen in their own tongue. It was a peculiar joy to have the responsibility of producing this Gospel for the Bunnun people.

Vietnamese : 300,000 copies of the four Gospels and Acts. Vietnamese was formerly known as Annamese and is the language of the people who inhabit the long coastal area of French Indo-China.

Several large editions of the New Testament and Portions have been printed for special campaigns in Hongkong and Formosa and large supplies have been sent to Korea for work among Chinese prisoners of war.

In addition to supplying the Word to the immediate China area, that is Hongkong and Formosa, Scriptures in Chinese produced in Hongkong have been shipped to many parts of the world. Orders have come from and books have been despatched to all countries in South-East Asia, including Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, Malaya, Indonesia, the Phillippines, Japan, and to the South Sea Islands, New Zealand, South America, Mexico, the U.S.A., India, Ceylon, Europe and Southern Rhodesia.

Another interesting department of Bible Society work in Hongkong is that of revision. The Rev. Lu Chen Chung, a Chinese scholar with a knowledge of both Greek and Hebrew, has been working in Hongkong for the past three years on a revision of the Kuoyu Bible. By the end of 1952 he had completed his revision of the New Testament and is now working on the Old Testament. Also for the past three years a Committee has been at work in Hongkong completing a revision of the New Testament in Mongolian. One particular difficulty was that of finding Mongolian type. After trying unsuccessfully to find this type in several important centres of the world, it was decided that it would be necessary to have it made in Hongkong. Mongolian is a particularly intricate script and yet the manufacturers, working in a language of which they have no knowledge, have produced a very acceptable type. The type is now being set and the revised New Testament should be completed within the next few months.

As the volume of work increased, it became necessary to find less crowded quarters and recently—without paying key-money !—the increased staff of four persons moved into a larger office.

When production began in Hongkong, it was hoped that it might supplement the work of the China Bible House but, as time went on, contact with the China Bible House headquarters in Shanghai became less frequent, until eventually, in May 1951, it was necessary to sever all connection. Thus the Hongkong office became a separate agency, adopting the name Hongkong Bible House and, instead of merely supplementing the work of China Bible House, it has become responsible for the wider work, formerly undertaken by that office, of supplying the Word to Chinese in all parts of the world. Hongkong, therefore, has become a centre of strategic importance in the world-wide work of the Bible Societies not only in the distribution of the Word, but also in production.

In considering the work that has been done in Hongkong and the fields served, there is yet further evidence of God's leading in the wisdom of the decision made by the Executive Committee in Shanghai in 1948.

WORK IN COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

BERNARD J. TIDBALL.

IT is a frightening but thrilling experience to be charged with making the work of the Society known to an unknown multitude of people. Yet that must be the experience of almost every member of a Bible Society's Staff. As Youth and Education Secretary of the B. & F.B.S. the writer is ultimately responsible for a vast and ever changing constituency—YOUTH. This constituency has two main departments. Individually and in groups, some hundreds of young people from 15 to 35 years are in touch with the Society and come together from time to time on a local and national scale for meetings, conferences and holiday house parties. The Society also seeks entry into various youth clubs and fellowships which abound in every part of Britain, some connected with and others entirely independent of Churches of various denominations.

There are in addition many thousands of schools of all types in which it is also urgently desirable for the Society's work to be known and while entry to many is denied us the opportunity remaining in others is far larger than the Society can possibly take advantage of.

Many members of Staff, both from Headquarters and especially Regional and District Secretaries, visit youth clubs and fellowships, promote Bible Society Youth Groups and visit the schools open to them. In addition a number of voluntary workers help in the Auxiliaries or arrange visitation of local schools. My colleague, Miss D. R. Allder, has also a dual responsibility, namely for work amongst children and in schools. Between us alone many thousands of miles are travelled annually in seeking to acquaint children and young people with the vital significance of the Society's work in the world of our day and in enlisting their help eventually to take the place of the faithful supporters who have assisted the Society by their prayers, gifts and labours for so long.

In this article my aim is only to outline my own sphere of work in educational circles without dealing with youth work as a whole or examining in detail Miss Allder's work amongst children. For the sake of clarity I have sub-divided various aspects of the subject.

Field of Work.

In a necessarily limited and specialised field my first priority is given to Theological Colleges of which there are more than fifty of all denominations in England and Wales. In addition there are about one hundred and fifty Teacher Training Colleges where future teachers in various grades of School are trained in general subjects. There are also Colleges for more specialised training in Domestic Science subjects, Physical Culture and Technical subjects.

Entry is also sought into the " Public Schools " of which there are more than two hundred. These schools are independent of the State and are " controlled in the public interest by a Governing Body created by some statute, scheme, or other trust deed." In them boys are educated with a view to entering the professions, military forces, Civil or Colonial Services and the Universities.

The above-mentioned colleges and schools are situated in every part of the country, including some of the coastal islands, and most of them are not grouped or connected in cities or big towns.

A number of privately owned and managed schools also exist and preparatory schools, some connected with the Public Schools.

The State schools fall into four groups, namely, Primary for young children, Secondary Modern and Technical Schools for older children and Grammar or High Schools for higher education. There are also a number of Schools owned and managed by Church Denominations.

Methods of Approach and Operation.

The correct approach in the case of all State Schools is to gain the sanction first of the Local Education Authority and afterwards the permission of individual Heads of schools. In the case of Colleges and Public Schools, the welcome of Principal or Headmaster is sought. There are three variations in my method of working :

(*a*) direct visitation to a college or public school. This is especially necessary when an invitation is extended to preach in chapel services on Sundays ;

(*b*) general visitation of schools and colleges in the district of one visited as in (*a*) above. This is very difficult to arrange owing to full timetables and other " extra " activities to school and college curricula ;

(*c*) visitation of schools of all types in an area in a period of several days. Usually in this instance the smaller schools only are co-operative. Such visits are planned by a keen Auxiliary Secretary or local school teacher or Head.

In general the visitation of State and Private schools is the responsibility of the Society's District Secretaries who make annual returns of visits to me.

My colleague, Miss Doris Allder, is responsible for Girls' Schools but also does much visitation of all types of schools on the " area " scheme as in (*c*) above.

Response.

A warm welcome is given in the majority of Public Schools, most of which regularly support the Society by money gifts. The foundation of nearly all of them is distinctly Christian. Entry into Training Colleges and State Schools largely depends on Principals and Headmasters but there is much genuine interest and sympathy. This is certainly partly due to the 1944 Education Act when the teaching of religious knowledge in schools, and the training of teachers for this, were raised to a new status. In fact the only compulsory subject in British schools to-day is " religious knowledge " and the raising of the subject from being either of nuisance value or a very poor option to an examination subject has meant a revolution in the attitude towards it. It is now realised in Training Colleges that for teaching Religious Knowledge teachers need to be equipped with knowledge and technique comparable with that required to teach mathematics, history or the sciences.

It is common for a college Principal to set aside a lecture period for my use. The attitude of students is a mixture of genuine interest, because of their personal Christian convictions and Bible knowledge, apathy due to ignorance or poor " Scripture teaching " in their own schooldays, and hostility to religion in general and Bible teaching in particular. With the possible exception of Theological Colleges I consider the Teacher Training Colleges to be the most strategically important field for our propaganda. There are two distinctly hopeful signs in the observed attitude of students : one,

extremely well-attended voluntary sessions after lecture hours (I spoke to over two hundred students in this way on one occasion) and two, a real desire by many to teach Religious Knowledge in their schools at the termination of their college course if only sufficient knowledge and technique can be acquired.

Opposition.

From time to time one finds opposition in both school and college circles on the following grounds :

(1) the time-table is too full to admit outside speakers or too many are already invited for the current session. In most cases, but this is by no means universally true, the best time to approach educational bodies is the beginning of the academic year ;

(2) there are " too many good causes " and " we can't support them all " or " we're getting a bit tired of being asked " ! It is difficult to dispel the idea that the Bible Society is a charitable organisation which seeks the pity (and pocket money) of pupils and students. Several school Headmasters have, at first, rejected the suggestion of a visit in order to " protect " their boys.

(3) some deputations, even missionaries from overseas, have been unsuccessful, and such failure can do great harm. There is no doubt that many people who cherish the desire to talk to boys have little gift for this work and bring not only the sponsoring Society but the Kingdom of God into disrepute. One source of disaster, according to the opinions of Headmasters, is the fatal temptation for speakers to talk down to audiences or to illustrate their Society's work by stories which, however touching, only succeed in putting off their hearers. So serious has this been in some instances that Heads of schools who are keen Christians themselves and most sympathetic to the Society's work and the missionary cause in general, hold tenaciously that it is better for the school staff themselves to disseminate the information and seek the boys' support.

(4) sometimes, though not often, one receives absolute refusals because the Headmaster or Principal is " not interested " or considers " the subject is irrelevant."

In spite of official opposition and refusals it is nearly always possible to gain entry into schools and colleges where an audience of the whole body of pupils or students is denied. And, it must be said in all fairness, some Heads and Principals who are reluctant to welcome one unreservedly, suggest a visit to the Christian Union, Student Christian Movement branch or Missionary Group. Although one's audience is likely to be small it seldom consists only of those belonging to these groups for open meetings are usually announced for a guest speaker. Thus I was invited to a college of one of our older Universities to speak to the missionary group. On the following morning I addressed a gathering of more than a hundred and fifty students of several faculties, and many nationalities, at a missionary breakfast before the day's lectures began. At a theological college where the Principal had not considered a visit desirable for the current year I attended a meeting of the missionary-minded students, at their request, only to find nearly every college student present together with two of the tutors ! (Lest the reader should imagine that I care nothing for the authority of College Principals, may I hasten to add that since the occasion reported I have had a warm invitation from the Principal himself and hope to accept it this term.)

Subjects of Lectures and Talks.

In all the rich variety of subjects at the disposal of a Bible Society speaker I am sure it is vitally important for this underlying and ever-present principle to be borne in mind : the value of the Bible to the individual and its relevance to all aspects of life. If this conviction cannot be imparted in some measure to all audiences no worthwhile support for the Bible Societies will be forthcoming.

Theological Colleges : The general history and *raison d'être* of the Society is little known but never fails to arouse interest. Knowledge is also sought concerning the Society's present work, especially in reference to the rapidly changing face of world affairs, and its future plans. Some students are particularly interested in one or other of the specialised branches of work, translation for example.

Schools of all types : The work of the Society is introduced usually through one of its special aspects : Translation, Printing, Circulation. Talks on the Bible itself are often requested ; for example, the Bible library, the history of the English Bible, the Bible and Literature. The place of the Bible in the spread of Literacy arouses great interest. The significance of the Bible (and therefore the Bible Society) in world situations and events, the work of the Society in a country at present " in the news " or which is (happily at times) the subject of current geography lessons, the answer of the Bible to some of the problems of these lands—these are but a few of the types of approach one can adopt.

Teacher Training Colleges : The best approach, in my experience, has been to speak first on the relevance of the Bible to Life, to Education, to History or Politics. This last is not to be interpreted in the common narrow sense but rather as politics affect the life of Man, his relationship to his fellows, as between him and the State, the meaning of freedom and a free Society. If the Bible has anything useful to say on these matters, students will be prepared to listen—and even revise their own opinions—and the place of the Bible Society in the world setting is obvious.

It is important to note that the above subjects are not strictly confined to the school or college as listed above and often one's subject is suggested. When speaking of the Bible or the Society the historical, factual approach is always appreciated and interest in the Society's world-wide work readily aroused.

Visual Aids.

Exhibits, films, film-strips, slides, charts, maps, pictures, flannelgraphs, facsimile pages from famous Bibles are used whenever possible and never fail to arouse and retain interest. Lectures, sermons, informal talks are given as circumstances dictate and discussion sessions held wherever possible.

Links with the Society.

An effort is always made to sustain interest and link the audiences with the wider fellowship of the Society through Auxiliaries, Youth Groups, Adult Conferences, Summer Youth House Parties, Study Week-ends and special events such as the Annual Meeting in London, visiting Exhibitions and Pageants. It is always important that theological students know where they can find the nearest District Secretary when they settle in parishes and pastorates. Literature is sent as a gift or for sale wherever acceptable and visits of school-children to Bible House encouraged. Many members of the summer Schoolgirls' House Camp and Youth House Parties have first been found at schools during a visit.

Day Conferences.

Successful conferences have been held in Bible House on Saturdays for senior London school-children. These have included a talk, a tour of Bible House, a film-showing and discussion groups. The young people have brought their meals with them and greatly enjoyed the fellowship. Similar short conferences have also been held for teachers who have since drawn on the Society's exhibits and visual aid materials for lesson purposes.

Schools Committees.

In two city areas these committees have been set up and are functioning efficiently. The suggestion was first made by a Regional Secretary who found many local helpers in education circles. Due to their enthusiasm schools of all types have been circularised in their areas with lists of speakers and subjects for their choice. In both cases prominent citizens and educationalists have readily agreed to serve on the committee and to give the project their active support.

Despite the foregoing information regarding approach to and visitation of Britain's schools and colleges, it cannot be denied that there remains a vast field of unexplored opportunity within which are some thousands of schools where the work of the Society is unknown. One of the more solid hopes for the future lies in these Schools Committees where the routine work of approaching schools and sending speakers will be done not by Bible Society staff, who cannot possibly give the necessary time, but by local keen Christians. These must have connections in schools and amongst educational authorities who are anxious that the Bible should be fully acknowledged at the centre of education and that the Societies which circulate it should be supported.

PIONEERING AMONGST TEEN-AGERS

WILLIAM H. HUDSPETH

THANKS to the help of Miss Webster (Associate Secretary of the Department of Christian Education of the Canadian Council of Churches), 1951 saw a fresh field of service for the British and Foreign Bible Society in Canada. Miss Webster co-opted the Society's Audio-Visual Education Secretary in the planning of a project which introduced Bible Society work to many thousands of Canadian boys and girls, aged twelve to seventeen. Each year summer camps for teen-age children are arranged and sponsored by the Department of Christian Education of the Canadian Council of Churches. One of the many delightful features of Canadian life is the efficient organisation of such camps in which children may take one or two weeks vacation for a very moderate cost. In this way, mothers, over-burdened with household labour, can be freed from the worry and care of children, especially during the hot weather, while at the same time the children benefit by the recreational facilities provided in the camps.

The boys and girls are encouraged to make a camp offering for some philanthropic project and this is given to an inter-denominational organisation. A number of denominational camps using the same programme as those within the inter-denominational set-up also contribute. Last year, 1951, the camp committees of the boys and girls work boards decided that the offering should be given to the Bible Society to be used in providing diglot Gospels for new Canadians. Diglots, as the reader will know, are Gospels

printed with a foreign and the English language side by side. Experience has proved that teen-age children respond generously when a definite objective is given to them. Miss Urquhart worked with the camp committees in the preparation of a packet of materials to make known the offering project to camp directors and leaders throughout the country. This packet contained a poster, some mimeographed material, sample pages from old diglot Gospels, a copy of a three-language pamphlet (English, French and German) used to greet immigrants, and a pamphlet " The Bible Society—What It Is and What It Does." All camp directors received copies of the packet from the Department of Christian Education, while the Bible Society's district secretaries were all sent a sample packet in the hope that they would give whatever assistance they could, should such assistance be desired.

What the exact total attendance at these camps was, I do not know, but it was at least five thousand, so that five thousand boys and girls became aware of what the Society does for new Canadians and for the evangelisation of countries throughout the world. The Department of Christian Education sent a cheque to the National Office here of some $5,000. I was informed that three-quarters of this generous contribution came from girls' camps, the remaining twenty-five per cent. from boys' camps. $5,000 is in itself no small sum, but the exciting feature of it all was that :

(1) An entirely new line of approach to children was made.
(2) A new field of religious education was opened up.
(3) In the years ahead, the far-reaching effects of such contacts with teen-agers may prove incalculable.

THE BALLAD OF MY BIBLE.

HELMUT GOLLWITZER*

In the following pages we reproduce, with the kind permission of the publishers a section from a book issued by the Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Munich, entitled " Und führen wohin du nicht willst " (" Whither thou wouldest not.") This diary of almost five years of captivity in Russia is to be published shortly by the S.C.M. Press, London, in an English translation by the Rev. R. W. Fenn, whose text has been used here. Ed.

THREE army huts. In the first we waited to be searched, in the second the examination took place, and from there we moved into the third. It was all well designed to prevent smuggling, but so carelessly carried out in the usual Russian way, that we were able to meet outside the huts, and those not yet searched could pass to those already searched things that they did not want discovered. Here and there in the half-light figures could be seen sitting down with assumed carelessness and scrabbling apparently absent-mindedly in the earth, secretly burying things that they knew would catch the eye of the Russians, from shaving tackle to an army compass, in the hope of being able to dig them up again later. I, too, had concealed one or two things in this way, but books might, I thought, be too easily damaged by burying, and so I asked one of those who had already been searched, a lawyer from my former division, whether he would mind them for me, particularly the Bible, which I prized more than all the rest. It was a little " mustard-seed " Bible, a present from some friends who had emigrated, and I had carried it with me for years. He said he would gladly take charge of the books, " but the Bible, no !" he said, " I mean, you should carry the Bible openly.

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That cannot possibly be taken from you." I looked at him with astonishment. For the first time I realised that an angel can look like a little lawyer from Crossen-an-der-Oder, for it was the voice of an angel speaking to me.

" Thank you !" I said, " You need not say any more. I know now what I have to do."

In the examination room were a number of tables, with a Red-army man at each, and everywhere junk-heaps of confiscated things. Presently my Red-army man came to the books at the bottom of my rucksack. Ah ! Fascist literature ! he said. Fortunately a Russian Lieutenant happened to be standing near. He was interested in books, and turned the pages. It was an anthology of lyric poetry of all nations that had been published before 1933. He found a picture of Goethe and looked at it with great respect, then Heine, whom he recognised at once. " Oh ! Here is ' Geinrich Geine '— a great poet !" Then he came across Pushkin and his delight was boundless. He began to recite some lines of Pushkin, and asked me whether I could repeat a poem of Heine. Of course I could think of nothing but " Leise zieht durch mein Gemüt," which I recited with a good deal of unction. He found it in the book and spelled it out as I repeated it, and suddenly we were oblivious to all else, on a little island of poetry in the middle of a sea of junk. Meanwhile the Red-army man rolled himself a cigarette, but at last he got bored and interrupted our little idyll by handing over another book. At once suspicion checked our budding friendship. How is it a Fascist soldier has no Fascist books with him ? Fascist books of course are poison, and must be confiscated and destroyed at sight. He was finally convinced by the date of publication that an eighty-year old ' siebenkäs ' edition was scarcely likely to be infected by Fascism. And then he found the Bible and was about to throw it on to the junk-heap with a contemptuous gesture : " Why a Bible ?" I looked on in silent surprise, sure that he could not really do it, and just as his arm was raised to throw he changed his mind and started to turn pages over. Inside it he found a little Roman Catholic picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, put there in gratitude by a little Polish girl, whom I had rescued from a burning house. He noticed it and asked if it was a Catholic Bible. I said : " No it is a Lutheran one."

" Are you a Lutheran ?"

" Yes."

Why then have you got this Catholic picture in it ? I told him its origin, and asked him how he came to be so well informed about the different confessions. He said shortly that there were different religions in Russia also, but what he could not understand was why I, who was obviously a cultured man, who read Goethe, ' Geinrich Geine,' and Pushkin, should also read the Bible. My Russian was scarcely sufficient to explain to him that it was the really cultured people who were able to reconcile the two things. Shaking his head over this dialectic, which was clearly too difficult for him, he gave me back the Bible, waved the Red-army man aside, and let me go through. Outside I passed a whole heap of useless junk that was being burned. On it I saw the remains of an old Silesian hymnbook. I took it with me and felt the richest man in the world.

Two hundred of us, including my group, had been sent away, first by train and then two days of marching in charge of a Lieutenant, who was a bundle of nerves. At first he adopted a ferocious attitude and talked about nothing but executions, and then developed into a human being. We arrived

at a half-finished camp in the forest, and were welcomed by a hundred old prisoners. At first we were kept three weeks in quarantine, for that was the rule. All new prisoners had to have three weeks complete rest and feeding up in order to recover. Pleasant weeks of sunshine and conversation and making new friends. But almost at once the spectre of searching began to haunt us. We heard that it was even more unreasonable here than elsewhere, and so we had once again to start looking for hiding-places. There was nowhere in the huts themselves, for they were also searched. If we gave our things to the old prisoners, it was uncertain whether we should ever get them back. So, as we could not leave the huts at night, we looked about at dusk for places to bury them. It seemed safest underneath the huts, which stood on posts, and so I buried my bread-satchel with letters and books, and in a specially selected spot the copy of Dante's " Divina Comedia," which I had recently acquired from somebody, and the Bible. My faith had weakened somewhat, and I thought on purely rational grounds, " You got away with it once, but what guarantee is there that you will do so a second time ? Do what commonsense and prudence suggest." I did so, and was immediately punished. The searching was delayed, and we were beginning to think that it was not going to happen at all, so after a day or two we dug up some of our things. But my satchel Dante and the Bible were gone ! The old prisoners, who were allowed to move about the camp freely even at night, or the Rumanian 'konvois,' the Soviet word for troops escorting prisoners of war, must have stolen them. Paper was in great demand, not for writing on, not for reading or other ordinary purposes, but for the first and noblest use of paper in Russia, for which it was providentially invented centuries ago by the Chinese—for rolling cigarettes! Dante had rather too stiff paper for that, but the India paper of the Bible was just ideal. I appealed to the leader of the old prisoners. He was quite decent and promised to do his best. Actually he brought back the satchel next day with very little missing, but none of his men had Dante or the Bible : he could assure us of that. That was my punishment, and I could only blame myself for my loss. My immediate companions were almost as shocked as I was. They knew what it meant to me, and probably hoped for some little support for themselves from the presence of a Bible. Now the coming days, the most difficult in all our lives, must be faced without it, or at least without being able to open it and read it and discover new truths in it. The Word of God would of course remain with us without it. Had it not spoken to me through the words of the Bible for many years ? It would be there inside me without the printed text. Wherever I was I carried on a kind of Bible study. In order to retain in my memory what I already knew, and in order to be able to call it to mind quickly, I went over in my mind and memorised the contents of the Bible from the first chapter of Genesis onwards, and was distressed to find so many gaps in my knowledge, and was glad of what I could remember. But I still could not completely realise that I should now be entirely deprived of the written word. Those who despise it have no idea what it means to be without it. I remembered that day during my first arrest in 1937 in the cell in the Alexanderplatz police-station. After a few days this little Bible was handed to me in my washing, and as I held it in my hand, it seemed as if the prison walls were down, leaving me free and happy. I thought that now it could go on as long as it liked, months or years : I had occupation and company enough in the Bible, as much as in the free world outside. And now it had gone without hope of recovery, and I was foolish enough to say to Gustav : " Gone is gone, and even God himself could not give it back to me, for only the Rumanians could have taken it, and they will certainly have torn it to bits and smoked it." But next evening, following a vague hunch, I crawled underneath the hut once more and hunted about.

I found a spot with newly piled up earth, scraped it away—and pulled out my Bible! Dante, so unsuitable for smoking, was nowhere to be found, but the Bible was lying in a quite different place from where I had buried it: it had obviously been reburied by that unknown Rumanian for some reason or other.

So my period of captivity began with this assurance "You will not be left alone," and as a sign this little black book, a book of infinite blessing, remained with me unchallenged in all the searchings, until I returned home.

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December, 1949. Swerdlovsk station in the Urals. Our four years dream was about to be fulfilled. The transport train was to take us back home. Stephan tugged at my sleeve: "Come here," he said "I want you to meet a remarkably fine man, Dr. S." I was glad to do so, for I had heard a great deal about him, and we had often been close together without actually meeting. He was the brother of a fellow-worker in Dahlem, who had been killed. He had won a great reputation in the prison-camps, running Bible-classes and even a church choir, and had, as a doctor, stood up for the German soldiers so vigorously that he had become a nuisance to the Russians and they had set him to work. He had just arrived from a neighbouring camp, to travel home with us. We shook hands cordially, with a familiarity almost unknown in civilian life, and his first few words revealed what had been his chief anxiety: "Do please remember in your prayers the plea that the Russians at Brest may leave me my Bible and my music. I mean the motets that I have written during these years. You can imagine what that would mean to me." At Brest. That meant at the Russian-Polish frontier, where, as we knew, the most ruthless examination of all took place, before we left Russian territory. Every scrap of printed or written paper was confiscated, even religious writings. Everything was examined to see whether any secret notes were hidden. The bottoms of our home-made wooden chests were pierced, the seams of all garments scrutinised. The panic fear of spies, which was part of a system based on the belief that its very existence depended on keeping its life secret from the eyes of the wicked world, had gone to fantastic lengths. Dr. S's anxiety was also mine. Only those who have experienced such fears know how strongly they can obtrude themselves even into the joy of returning home. Every time we met during our two weeks journey Dr. S. spoke of his anxiety, and he so impressed me with it, that I made a little bargain with Heaven. As it was clearly so much more important to S. to get his things through the frontier examination than it was to me to keep mine, I was prepared to sacrifice my Bible. I would forget my wish to bring it through and reconcile myself to its loss without regret, if only he could be allowed to keep his things. At Brest we had to wait a whole day before we got off the train and passed through the examination, and we discovered that the narrow gauge train for Frankfurt a.d. Oder was standing waiting on a line near by, and that it was possible after the search to cross over from the new train to the old one and fetch any things we had hidden there to save them from confiscation. Unfortunately this way was not possible for me, because I had to carry my Bible openly, and because I had secretly offered it as a sacrifice. So it happened in my case according to my expectations. A long army hut with tables on both sides and an army security man at each. We paraded naked in front of them with all our kit and were subjected to the most rigorous search. Bible, hymn-book, prayerbook, and a tiny Turkish Koran, printed by the German military authorities for the Turkish volunteer batallions, and so small that it could only be read with a magnifying-glass,—these all found their way on to the junk heap. The interpreter, to whom I spoke about it, shrugged his shoulders

sympathetically. It would be quite useless, he said, to appeal to higher authority. The order to confiscate all written and printed matter was strict and admitted no exception. So I passed through with the sad conviction that Dr. S. also, who had been sent through a neighbouring room, must have lost everything. I found him in the new train over on the narrow gauge track, and said : " Well, there was nothing we could do about it, was there ? Smuggling would have been too risky anyhow. An officer in our group, who had some letters hidden in the double bottom of his case, was arrested at once and sent back to Russia. It is better to get home without a Bible than not at all." " What do you mean ?" he said, " I got everything through." I gaped. " How could that happen ?" He told me that he had spread all his things out quite openly in front of the security man, and when the man was going to take them away, he had appealed first to an interpreter, and then to a woman Kommissar, who happened to be passing. In his fluent Russian he had explained everything to her, and given his word of honour that there were no secret notes concealed anywhere. She listened to him, but refused regretfully. Suddenly, when all seemed lost, she turned back and said that he could lay the matter before a higher Kommissar, in the room " behind the door over there." And so he gathered together all his things without any protest from the security man, went out at the door indicated, saw the door to the Kommissar's office on the left and straight ahead the way out from the hut to the train. Of course he went out that way, and here he was with all his precious possessions. I almost threw my arms round his neck. I was poorer by one Bible, and richer by one more ' sign.'

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In another section of his book, Professor Gollwitzer describes the religious side of life in captivity. In one of the last camps to which he was sent in the Ural Mountains, he was asked to take the leadership of an already existing small Christian community of prisoners.

Because I was a theologian and happened to be on the spot, they had confidently entrusted the leadership to me, although to a thorough-going Pietist the fact of being a professional theologian was not exactly a guarantee of spiritual qualities. They all came to hear one thing, and this one thing had to be talked about. It arose whenever the Bible was discussed, which was indeed the bond that united us all. In the unusual circumstances the Bible came to occupy for us exactly the same position as it did for the men of the Reformation : without much debate about it, it was realised that, because of the many differences that existed among us, mutual strengthening, encouraging and instruction could always be found only indirectly through the Bible. Through it even a Catholic could say to a Baptist, or a minister of the established church to a Darbyist, the things that we needed for our daily living. In our experience all the astonishing things were confirmed that the Reformers had dared to assert about the Bible : that it is not a dead book, but an ever-living one, and not even a book at all, but the presence of real living voices ; that it has in itself the power to make itself plain ; that it speaks clearly and distinctly, and that it is of itself entirely sufficient to bring men to Christ ; that it has the power of reconciliation, and is able to overcome wide differences in ways of thought and forms of experience. We contented ourselves with this experience, and did not argue it out polemcially. Of necessity we did not set out to convince each other of the rightness of our own views, or try to convert each other to our particular confession. In other camps there were conversions to and from Roman Catholicism. Our concern was only that we all here should be daily turned to Christ.

SUMMER JOTTINGS

OLIVIER BÈGUIN

Berlin

BERLIN presented an indeed sad spectacle to the visitor early in the summer. Various measures recently taken by the authorities of the D.D.R. (German Democratic Republic) had brought anxiety to more than one heart : the closing of the frontier between West and East Germany and around West Berlin ; the cancellation of all permits for West Berliners to enter the D.D.R. ; increased control over the movements of D.D.R. citizens —particularly students—going to Berlin ; the refusal to authorise Church youth groups to hold their annual regional meetings in public places ; the withdrawal of the promise to allow 5,000 East Germans to go to Hannover for the meetings of the Lutheran World Federation and 20,000 to attend the *Kirchentag* (Church Day) in Stuttgart ; calls addressed to people working in East Berlin but living in West Berlin to move to the East. What will be the future of Berlin ? For many it looks dark and hopeless. There was certainly a black shadow cast over the divided city this summer.

And yet I found the representatives there of the Berlin and Altenburg Bible Societies cheerful and fearlessly planning for the future. These two Societies which print and distribute only in the D.D.R. have issued over one million copies of Scripture—Bibles, Testaments, Portions and Selections—since they resumed activity after the war. Cheap popular editions, illustrated issues, new translations, magazine Gospels, all kinds of Scriptures have been put at the disposal of the public, and although the most crying needs resulting from the destruction of the war years and from the insufficient supplies during that time have now been covered, the demand is far from being met and heavy responsibilities still rest upon the shoulders of the Bible Society leaders there.

All this production could not have been achieved if Bible Societies from all over the world had not assisted their sister Societies with the raw materials, books and funds which were not available in sufficient quantities on the spot. This has been a demonstration of fellowship in action ; these hundreds of thousands of books have been a concrete expression of what the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES represents, and that is why, in spite of all the problems, all the difficulties, all the anxieties and the fears which surround people in Berlin, a visit to the Bible Societies there is always an inspiration and a deep joy.

But a visit to Berlin also makes one aware of the fundamental importance of Bible work for the Church. More and more in the D.D.R. the churches are becoming aware that the real life of the Church can only be founded on the Bible. Bible study is becoming the main feature in Church youth groups, in the student communities, in work amongst men. Only through permanent contact with the Bible is it possible for the man of today to see his way through all the problems he has to face.

" And so," writes a Church leader, " it is more than ever necessary that men between 25 and 50 should be grounded in the Word. There is no time for trivialities. The plan for Bible work stands at the centre of the work amongst men. The ministry to man is quite centrally a ministry of the Word to him. For only in this way can Christ become a great reality to him ; and that is what we are after ! Only in this way can there be Bible-reading, praying men who ' live near to Christ' and consciously wish to belong to Him, even if another religious system is seeking to gain power over their consciences. Only if there are really groups of men under the sound of the

Word, can they—in their daily life—live out the basic principle of the Reformation of *sola fide* to which every individual is called in the many decisions to be made each day . . . . . We have discovered how up-to-date the Bible is. The so-called topic of the day never comes off badly ; for it always is a question of the implications of the Word in a daily life, which is based upon a completely opposite outlook or faith. Where the Scriptures are the point of contact in the necessity for dealing with acute questions, one is saved from looking at topics of the day from other than evangelical motives."

Only a faith rooted in the Word of God and not just in some general ideas about Christianity can help people not only in the D.D.R., but also all over the world, in the times full of tension and difficulty which are set before us in this second half of the twentieth century.

And thus, the leaders of the Bible Societies in Berlin are convinced that it is also one of their essential responsibilities to encourage the churches and to help them in evangelistic efforts based on a wide distribution of Scripture portions, and plans have now been made by which the Bible Societies will no longer be satisfied in meeting the demand, but will also take their share in bringing the Word of Life to those who are desperately seeking a way out of the dark.

Willingen

Willingen : the missionary world invaded a peaceful German holiday resort : dark faces, exotic dresses, strange languages ; younger churches, older churches and missionary societies had sent their delegates. Everybody was thrilled : after such great names as Edinburgh, Jerusalem, Madras, Whitby, what would Willingen mean for the future of the missionary movement ? No real watchword resulted from two weeks of study and discussion but there was a very definite sense that things are moving rapidly and that century-old patterns are disintegrating. It was too early, however, to shape the new forms of future missionary activity, and no prophetic word was given ; but there were indications in no uncertain terms of the problems to which church and mission leaders will have to apply themselves in the years to come.

This is not the place to go into these questions ; many of them are not relevant to our work ; others have already been solved as far as we are concerned by the creation in many former ' missionary ' countries of independent national Bible Societies with whom the older Societies co-operate on a completely equal footing.

But in Willingen, and since then, my mind has been wrestling with two main questions . . . . . without, I regret to say, much success. One is rather theoretical. Thirty learned theologians debated at length in Willingen the basic problem of the missionary obligation of the Church. Their report was rejected by the plenary session ; only six or eight points of divergence of opinion which had been proposed by the section for further studies in the years to come were "received." Why have we, as Christians and as churches, a missionary obligation ; of what does this obligation consist ? It is a serious matter that no unanimous answer could be given. It is tragic ; it is also symptomatic. What answer would we give with regard to our work ? Would we be less divided if we were to ask the question in a U.B.S. conference ? For our fellowship, for our co-operation, for the co-ordination of our efforts, the matter is indeed of little importance. So it is for the missionary societies too. But still the problem remains : how can we convincingly appeal to the churches, and more particularly to the Christians of the younger generation, to take their share in the work of the Bible Societies, in the missionary dissemination of the Holy Scriptures, if they do not agree with and neither see nor

understand the whys and wherefores of the missionary obligation as expressed by the activity of the Bible Societies?

My other problem is a more practical one: how is it that the problems of the Bible Societies, particularly in the field of missionary distribution of the Scriptures, and the possibilities also that are offered by this method, meet so little acknowledgement and consideration outside of the circle of the Bible Societies (perhaps I should even say of *some* Bible Societies). Lip service is always readily paid to the missionary power of the Word of God in its printed form; but so little account is taken of it when plans, methods, programmes are discussed and elaborated. Are the Bible Societies missionary societies? Everybody will answer in the affirmative. Yet, why do their problems not come up naturally among the other missionary problems at such meetings, but have to be introduced from the outside, as it were?

If nothing else, Willingen has opened my eyes to the danger of the isolation —isolationism perhaps—of the Bible Societies. How to maintain closer contacts, how to improve or deepen understanding and co-operation, how to give a content to the warm friendship which exists between Bible and missionary societies, might well become a main concern of all Bible Societies on the national level as well as of the U.B.S. on the international level. We are in their hearts; we want to be in their thoughts . . . . . and vice versa!

Stuttgart

One of the highlights in Willingen was the half-hour of Bible study which followed immediately after morning prayers. Under the leadership of Dr. H. Kraemer the first week and of Dr. J. Mackay the second, we were all brought to our Bibles first thing in the morning. As far as I know, this was a new feature in ecumenical gatherings of that kind . . . . . with the exception of the Youth conferences in Amsterdam and Oslo, where all the mornings were occupied with the study of the Bible. Let us rejoice that in ecumenical gatherings, delegates are now called together to listen together to the Word of God, the only real foundations upon which the unity of the Body of Christ can be recovered and grounded!

This year again, the study of the Bible was also a prominent feature of the *Kirchentag* in Stuttgart. For many of those who attended the Stuttgart gatherings, this was the best and most rewarding feature of the *Kirchentag*.

"What made the deepest impression on us," writes the reporter of the religious press service in Switzerland, "was the Bible study which was held every morning in twelve different tents. Everywhere a few verses from Exodus 14 and 16 were explained. In many tents there were some thousands of participants together, each with Bible in hand. One had the impression that people were listening very carefully to what was being said. The work that was done here was doubtless very rich in blessing." For tens of thousands the Bible had something actual to say in those days. In those old stories, so often neglected and despised, a word for today was discovered. Egyptians, Israelites, Pharaoh, Moses, are not figures who have melted away into a far-distant past. They are of today; they surround our lives and God speaks to us through them. He comforts and warns. He saves.

A simple woman whom I helped with her luggage said: "I wanted to come to the *Kirchentag*. Another year it will be too far away. I shall not have the money or the time. But it is something one must go to once. It is for a life-time. I told my husband that and he agreed." For a life-time. Tens of thousands for whom, perhaps, the Bible is again becoming an open book for a life-time. There is hope for the Church when the Bible again becomes for its members the Bread of their daily life.

In connection with the *Kirchentag*, as mentioned elsewhere in this issue, the Stuttgart Bible Society (P.W.B.) set up on its premises a permanent Bible exhibition which I had had the privilege of visiting earlier in the summer with Director Dr. E. Diehl, the manager of the P.W.B. and initiator and organiser of this most interesting display of the history of the German printed Bible through the ages. I also went there during the *Kirchentag*. During the few moments I spent there, I was thrilled to see the many hundreds of people who came along bending over the numerous treasures and exhaustive typewritten explanations appended to each important book shown. There was an unending flow of people of all ages, of all walks of life, and it came home to me most strikingly how much the Bible Society, in that part of Germany at any rate, is a popular institution. I knew from reports that the Stuttgart Bible Society enjoys the very faithful support of Christians in Württemberg; it was a revelation to feel, by immediate contact as it were, the warmth and the depth of this interest. At the same time, the hope and the longing arose in me that these visitors should not only remain proud of the extremely high quality of the work of ' their ' Bible Society, but should also grow up (and be helped to do so) into a greater awareness of their responsibility for an increased participation of the German Bible Societies in the production of Scriptures for overseas. Undoubtedly, among ever-wider circles in the churches in Germany there is a new consciousness springing up of the importance of Bible reading for the life of the individual and of the Christian community. But this evolution should not stop there. It should also kindle a new burning and compelling desire to share this knowledge and this privilege with others, not only by helping them to find the Word of God in their Bibles, but also by supplying Bibles and Testaments for those who are still without a copy of the Holy Scriptures, at home or abroad.

Paris

The last step in an eventful summer. Pastor Harts of the Belgian Bible Society and Mr. Blumenthal of the French Bible Committee and I met together and tried to sum up the experiences and the lessons of the Bible exhibition in Belgium and in the South of France. This exhibition, which has been set up by the Belgian Bible Society, presents a good collection of copies of the Scriptures in various languages published at different periods since the sixteenth century. Facsimiles and pictures of parchments and manuscripts are also shown along with specimens of strange scripts and statistics of various kinds. Illustrations by Rembrandt and others keep the exhibition from being too dull and technical. Tables, window-boxes, stands, curtains and carpets, have been chosen and arranged with taste. In each locality an effort is made to discover and borrow old editions of the Bible. Thus, on more than one occasion, unsuspected treasures have been detected and shown to the public ; old manuscripts, often illustrated with miniatures, and incunabula have come out of the dark and the dust of provincial or local libraries to the amazement of many a visitor.

In France, as well as in Belgium, the exhibition has met with an unexpected response. Between 500 and 1,000 visitors have come every day to see it and to listen to the explanations of the local team of church members who work under the supervision of the pastor accompanying the exhibition. Lectures with and without lantern slides on the history of the Bible and of the Bible Societies and evangelistic messages are given in the evenings. The Bible van has toured the neighbourhood and the Bible traveller has visited all booksellers and suggested they should also have copies of the Bible in their display.

Thus a concentrated effort in evangelism is being made by the Bible Societies in co-operation with the local congregations, and certainly the case ' for the Bible ' is put as strongly as possible. But an exhibition, however successful it may be, soon fades into a more or less dim memory. It remains as a flash in the night and the benefit is small for the church as well as for the congregation if no appropriate follow-up is worked out. For it is not enough that the interest in the exhibition should extend to other towns, that official circles, as in certain parts of Belgium (a Roman Catholic country !) are won by the exhibition and offer their help and support for it to be shown elsewhere. What we want and hope for is that the exhibition should be the departure point for a far-reaching rediscovery of the Bible in congregations, and for a renewal of the missionary and evangelistic zeal in the individual as well as in the congregations. Bible exhibitions will not solve the problems of the sclerosis of the traditional churches, but if they are properly used, they may become the starting point of a chain of reactions which may at last break up the passivity and inertia of these churches.

It became very clear to us in Paris that the whole effort of the exhibition would not be worth-while unless it is continued and supported by an even greater effort on the part of the churches to assure a worthy follow-up to this initial action. Indeed, there are signs of such an attempt being made. Voluntary colportage has begun in one or two places in Belgium where the exhibition was shown last year. In Nancy, fifteen Bible study groups led by laymen have been started as a result of the exhibition and of the U.B.S. Regional Conference, and the history of the Bible and of the Bible Societies has won its place in the curriculum of the Sunday school. Friends of the Bible Societies have been enlisted who may become as leaven in the dough. Yet this is only a beginning and the follow-up action will need to be the main problem of the Bible Societies in France and Belgium this winter. It has been a great encouragement to see that this concern is not limited only to those responsible for the work of the Bible Societies, but it is also shared by many pastors and layman who, after having received the impulse connected with the preparation and holding of the exhibition, then ask : and now, what next ?

Visions and questions have come alternatively to my mind during this summer. There are immense, potentialities for Bible work in Europe today. A deep, faithful, prayerful knowledge of the Bible and its message is what people in Europe need today, to counteract all kinds of utopian ideas and all forms of despair, between which they ceaselessly swing. There are growing groups of Christians who have rediscovered the Bible and its relevance to their daily problems and struggles. There are tremendous opportunities for bringing the Good News to the masses ; there are also large crowds of people in the churches who are ready to be used, if the churches get moving. There is readiness to help, readiness to give, readiness to act, in spite of much hardness of heart, much pleasure-seeking, much indifference and much negation. Europe is no longer a Christian Europe and yet what has remained Christian (or even partly Christian) could do much more, witness much more effectively, take a much larger share in the world-wide evangelistic action of the Christian community, were the people called and led and set to work. It could be, or rather, it is certainly a task set before the Bible Societies in continental Europe, to play their part in this effort which is being made by many to break away from the traditional self-satisfied Christianity which has immobilised so many of the once living organs of the Body of Christ.